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ed out by foot-notes at the bottom of each page. On the other hand, as to the size of volume, typographical arrangement, completeness of explanatory notes, and full analysis of the characters of the plays, with their histories, Mr. Hudson's work may safely challenge competition with the long array of his predecessors.

In dismissing this subject, we cannot forbear a passing remark on the disappearance of the theatrical representatives of Shakespeare, just at the point of time when his text, in its highest attainable purity, is restored to the world. Garrick, Kemble, Siddons, Cook, Kean, and Macready, for the greater part of a century, practically expounded the language of the poet; and the genius of the actor, co-operating with the genius of the author, unfolded to five successive generations the living realities of Shakespeare's power. These six luminaries have now all passed away; Macready alone surviving to enjoy in retirement the homage due to his public talents and private virtues. The loss of these great actors is the more to be deplored, because *their* art dies with them; and hence it is not strange that, with their professional *exit*, the drama itself should have declined. Shakespeare is immortal in the library; but on the stage, probably few men now living will see him resuscitated.

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- ART. IX.—1. GUILLAUME GUIZOT : *Alfred le Grand*.
2. AMÉDÉE THIERRY : *History of Attila*.
3. M. THIERS : *Consulat et Empire*. Vol. XIV.
4. SCRIBE : *New Edition of Dramatic Works*.
5. LAMARTINE : *Entretiens Familiers*. Nos. 9, 10.
6. EDMOND et JULES DE GOUCOURT : *La Lorette*.
7. AMPÈRE : *L'Histoire Romaine à Rome*.

THERE is a rage for history just now in France, and for more than one good reason. First, there is no denying that the historic Muse has from time immemorial been propitious to her Gallic votaries. Their very language and their natural

turn of mind, their strong critico-philosophic instincts, with a far greater respect for accuracy than is often ascribed to them, and a patience of research subordinate only to their anxiety to discover hidden lore,— all these qualities eminently fit Frenchmen for the task of writing history, whether as chroniclers of what is passing, or as reproducers of what is long past. To say truth, the two so opposite races, the Gallo-Latin on the one hand, and on the other the Teutonic, are equally intent in our age upon the study of the great events of bygone times; but they set to work in very different ways, and the results of their labor are as diverse as their methods. The Latin blood that minglest in the veins of Frenchmen with that of Gaul, has made them chroniclers from the days of Tacitus to our own. From Eginhard and Joinville, Philippe de Comines and Froissart, down to the journal-keeping, diary-noting, letter-writing society of the seventeenth century, no event can be said to have passed in France unchronicled. If the historical student in France desires to render more familiar to the public any one particular period of the national story, it will not be the documents necessary to the achievement of his object that will fail him. When he has himself well determined what he wishes, he will very soon probably be confused by the quantity of contradictory information he will find ready to his hand on all sides. We have in one word pointed at what forms the difficulty of the historian's task in France, and what constitutes his merit, namely, the contradictions of the documents he discovers. Upon the same fact, upon the same person, one writer says one thing, and the other the direct reverse. Letters, diaries, memoirs, notes, memoranda, official reports,— every kind of paper that he can require, the historian will most likely find; but, as we have before said, half his documents will lead to one conclusion, and the other half to another. This is inevitable with the French temperament, and with the blind party zeal of Frenchmen, which, from the era of Charlemagne down to our own, has made it possible for party spirit to animate, inflame, and govern the whole race. For this very reason, however, the historian of our century is better placed for bringing to our knowledge the real truth of transactions that occurred two or three hundred years ago, than were the con-

temporaries who lived in the very heart of those transactions. He is dispassionate,—nay, perhaps even sceptical; he has before him the whole mass of evidence on both sides, and he is at liberty to judge what is the value of the depositions on either; but those depositions are at his service in abundance,—partial, it is true, and passionate, yet minute, full of interest, and *living* in their reality. This is not so with the German; never having been a noter of contemporary incidents, when he comes to be an annotator on those that are past, his difficulties are doubled, and he never succeeds in reanimating things and men as does the Frenchman. The best history or biography composed by a German is scarcely more than a mere document for those who possess the genuine historic vein. As we have said, then, in these facilities for writing history lies one of the chief reasons, if not *the* chief, of the multiplicity of historical works published in France. Another is to be found in the social and pecuniary advantages attached to this species of publication, and also in the ease with which it may be brought to serve the purposes of political hatred or affection. The writer of a serious historical work in France is pretty sure of being in due time a member of the *Académie Française*, and of securing to himself very considerable sums by the sale of his work; and he may perhaps inherit one day the pension of ten thousand francs a year, left by Baron Gobert to the historian accounted the most eminent in the country, and until his death enjoyed by the late lamented and illustrious Augustin Thierry. In the possible attainment of these latter distinctions lay, we are inclined to think, one of the great attractions of the historic Muse for M. Amédée Thierry, whilst we are half disposed to believe that the power of instituting political comparisons has not been without its charm for Ampère, and for the son of Louis Philippe's minister, M. Guizot.

When, some few months ago, the man who by common acclamation was recognized as the first historian of France, Augustin Thierry, died, his brother, as was not unnatural perhaps, fancied he might have some slight chance of succeeding to the academic position and emoluments of the deceased, with a view to which he had for years been following in the steps

of his illustrious senior. The calculations of Amédée Thierry were in this respect deceived. M. Henri Martin, the author of a long and complete History of France, objected to by some only on account of its democratic (or it was even said "socialist") tendencies, was the successful candidate for the Gobert pension; and the brother of Augustin Thierry had no notice taken of his claims, precisely, we believe, because it was not thought just that two members of the same family, bearing the same name, should monopolize distinctions and benefits meant to be strictly the reward of merit, not the result of favor. However that may have been, M. Amédée Thierry's books remain, and have, by their intrinsic worth, won from the public an attention that has been paid not to the name, but to the works only, of the writer. His History of Attila is a solid and valuable contribution to the historic learning of all nations in general, and is as interesting to the Anglo-Saxon races as to those of Gallo-Roman descent. When we reflect that the events narrated belong to the period of time that elapsed in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Christian era, that the heroes and heroines are no other than those of the *Niebelungen* (that Iliad of the Germans), and that our sympathy or antipathy, our interest, in a word, is demanded for Goths and Visigoths, Gepidæ, Ostrogoths, and Huns, and numberless other savages whose names some readers may perhaps never have even heard before,—when we reflect upon this, we cannot refuse our admiration to the historian, who, by the mere force of erudition, untiring research, talent, and that rarest of all qualities which some French critic has called *le don de vie*, has animated the personages of an almost fabulous drama, so as to make them live and act before our eyes as though they were our contemporaries. "The gift of life!"—yes, assuredly this is possessed by Amédée Thierry, if not to the whole extraordinary extent in which it was commanded by his eminent brother, at all events in a degree sufficient to make him one of the greatest of living historians.

Not a source has been neglected by the chronicler of the "Scourge of God"; and from Latin and Greek poets of the Lower Empire, from the effusions of Teutonic bards, from the traditionary tales carried from the camps of Hunnish tribes to

the tents of Arab chiefs, from the lays of Slavonian minstrels, and from the legends of saints and homilies of Churchmen, M. Thierry has collected the materials wherewith to reanimate the terrible scenes of a drama enacted in the very infancy of the modern age.

The hypercritics of France — those who hope to put down to the account of their own superior talent and learning all that they subtract from others — object that Amédée Thierry is “too picturesque,” and, starting from the point that “history is not meant to amuse, but merely to instruct,” they lose sight of the fact that what is tiresome is not remembered, and that history would cease to be instructive, if it ceased to be sufficiently interesting to make the necessary impression. It would be difficult, we think, to find any work in which, as completely as in M. Thierry’s *Histoire d’Attila et de ses Successeurs*, the destruction of that social and political form identified with the name of Rome is made evident, and the rising up described of that new society out of which are gradually to emerge all the splendors and all the darknesses, all the learning and the chivalry, all the crimes — yet all the forces — of the Middle Age in Europe. We recommend to our readers a scene which, when once read, is scarce likely to be forgotten, — the reception, namely, of the imperial Roman ambassadors by Attila. Each detail of the banquet to which these two representatives of what was the refinement and the glory of civilization are bidden by the great barbarian, is a lesson. The inferiority in which they are placed by what would in our times be termed the *etiquette* of Attila’s court, but which in his was the mere consequence of his consciousness of power, shows us more strikingly and more simply than would the most erudite and the driest dissertation, how completely Rome was already numbered with the things of the past, how bygone was her greatness, how impossible her regeneration, unless in an altered form. Comparing together the Rome that had been, of the Cæsars, and the Rome that was to be, of the Popes, the immense spiritual force that was to spring from the absolute ruins of temporal strength, the intense life that was to be born of such utter death, it seems to us, when witnessing the humiliation of the Empire before the Goth, as

though we were standing by the funeral pyre on which the dying Phœnix had breathed its last, and from the ashes whereof the new and more sovereign Phœnix had not yet risen. To those among our readers who regard history as something higher than a schoolboy's task, and who discern the philosophy taught by its annals, we strongly recommend Amédée Thierry's History of Attila as the best and most living reproduction of one of the most solemn moments of our world's existence,—the minutely detailed chronicle of that epoch when classic civilization, after long struggling, expired, and when Christian civilization, rude and barbarous, but strong, began to be, to act, to predominate over the human race.

We have said that the facility of instituting comparisons between the present and the past is one of the attractions of history to both Ampère and Guillaume Guizot; but we would not be made to say more than we really intend by this. We do not mean that either of these authors makes the history of the past serve the political passions of the present, but simply that, when either of them lights in history upon a period or an individual that offers a parallel to what exists in our day, he eagerly seizes upon it, and is active in pointing out all the hopes and fears, all the censure and the praise, that are justified in our own epoch by an attentive study of the past. The History of Alfred the Great, by the son of M. Guizot, is a remarkable monograph, the result of much research, and of what would be extraordinary erudition in a man so very young, were the paternal erudition not at his disposal to begin with. It is what such biographies ought always to be, the expression, in a concise form, of what has been gathered from a vast number of various sources; but remarkable as it undoubtedly is (and ought to be, with the name that stands on its first page), we cannot refrain from thinking that the reason of its existence is to be found in the following opening passage of the work:—

“Henri IV. is not, in the history of Christian Europe, the only prince who reigned ‘by right of conquest and by right of birth.’ England, as well as France, counts among her kings a great man, who by study and by war was obliged to carve his way to the throne that was the heritage of his race,—a destiny more enviable even than difficult;

for a just cause derives more lustre from hard-won victories than from success achieved with ease. Nothing strikes the imagination of nations more than the sight of an ancient supremacy that consents to be reinvigorated by its union with more modern fame, and that aspires to *deserve*; and for princes who have to serve their apprenticeship to the trade of royalty, the teachings of adversity and the efforts employed in contest are worth more than all the lessons of a Bossuet or a Fénelon. Alfred the Great and Henri IV. were strengthened in their own resolves by the feeling of their hereditary right, but in public favor by the renown of their personal high deeds. The hard and adventurous life of each instructed him in the character, the wants, and the resources of his people. Thus both, whilst fighting for the possession of a throne that was theirs in virtue of their ancestors, proved themselves worthy to be the ancestors of future kings,—the founders of states, as well as the heirs thereto. And it is in races and times so widely apart that twice this great trial has been made in history! How shall we then be blind to the lesson inculcated? Neither the splendor of personal genius alone, nor merely the venerable titles to sovereignty of an ancient house, will suffice as a basis on which to build a solid government; but here are two princes who prove to us that no resistance is possible against a power in which are combined together the double principles of the right of force and the force of right."

When we reflect upon the name, the position, and the specific opinions of M. Guizot's son, we can easily understand what tempted him in the life of the Saxon monarch; and it is not difficult to perceive, that, whilst for his general readers he tells a tale full of historic interest, he aims at pointing a moral to be applied to themselves by the heirs to sovereignty of the two Bourbon branches.

"Princes have been seen," he says, in evident allusion to Napoleon I. and Napoleon III., "who with right royal souls have seized upon authority and wielded it all their lives, yet who have died without leaving their power to their descendants, a great name to history, or great progress to their people. Why does the case stand so differently with the two we have mentioned? Because their genius and the circumstances that surrounded it were so much in harmony, that the dangers whereto their respective countries were exposed could be combated only by them and by them only vanquished. They were each of them as *necessary* as they were either legitimate by birth or personally great. Each did more for his kingdom than for himself. The ambition of each never appeared selfish, and in the success of each lay the salvation of

all. Henri IV. restored to France the peace and unity which religious dissensions had so violently disturbed ; and, long ages before the time of the Béarnese king, at the end of the ninth century, it was in saving England that Alfred founded his own glory and his throne, the double price of his victories. How he succeeded in his task it shall be our province to record."

Now that we have pointed out to our readers what we believe to have been the cause of M. Guillaume Guizot's History of Alfred, we can conscientiously testify, that, the cause granted, the work is, in every respect, an excellent one.

If the object of the writer we have just spoken of be to teach princes what they should do to regain their thrones, the object of M. Ampère is probably to teach tyrants what they should avoid when they are seated on them. His "History of Rome in Rome" is one of the most strongly marked books published in the French tongue for many years. It is a complex work, — not solely that of an historian, nor wholly that of a *savant*, but a mixture of both, to produce which the archæologist and the artist were as much required as the politician, the philosopher as the jurisconsult, and the upright citizen more than either or all. It is not with the learning of the schools that M. Ampère is satisfied, not with what we possess of classic erudition, nor with the sources to which the students of ancient annals more or less invariably resort. No; he is too much of a philosopher, and (if we were not afraid of the word in connection with so grave a writer's name, we would say) too much of a poet, not to seek other evidences of reality than these. Full of that thirst for life, which, as we have said, is so strong a characteristic of the French historian, Ampère was unable to make up his mind to write upon the Romans in a spot where nothing save dusty college reminiscences spoke to him of the glorious race ; and he accordingly started for the Eternal City, resolved to seek in the very stones and in the very atmosphere for traces of what had been the life of the past. The method has proved an excellent one, and the personages of the *Histoire Romaine à Rome* have a reality, and, to use a modern French term (adopted by the Germans also), an *actualité*, that unite the truth of detail of ancient contemporary authors to the critical and appreciative

sense of our day. One of Ampère's great studies is that of the portraits of those whose deeds he recounts; and when, with Tacitus or Suetonius, Cicero or Juvenal, in one hand, in the other he holds the genuine medal of a Cæsar, he compares form and physiognomy with the register of acts, and arrives at a reconstruction of the human being, at a reanimation of the man, as he lived and was, which very often seems to bear with it the evidence of incontrovertible truth.

This revival of the features and countenances of the heroes and heroines of history is a long-standing method with M. Ampère, and in a sketch of Catherine de Médicis, written long before his present work, we remember to have read the following lines :—

“ Nothing is more curious than to compare the likenesses of famous individuals at different moments of their career. For instance, take the charming bust (although there be a threatening shade already over it) of the young Octavius, and set it beside a bust of Augustus, when he has grown old in deceit. Look at the portrait of Madame de Maintenon which M. de Noailles has done well to place as a frontispiece to her history; for it reminds us that she once was young. Look also at this image of Catherine of Medici when a young girl! what is not told by the difference between the face of this little Florentine, who, though serious, is frank and resolute, and the hard profile of the widow of Henri II.?”

This comparison between the young Octavius and the veteran Cæsar towards the close of his reign and of his existence, has helped M. Ampère to one of the finest and most complete portraits of the Emperor Augustus of which the modern literature of Europe can boast.

In common with Machiavel, Gibbon, Montesquieu, and Voltaire, M. Ampère judges Augustus with unqualified severity. Had he found any part of his character which, whether as man or emperor, had given him a real right to the praises lavished upon him by those who feared, flattered, and were dependent on him, no one who knows Ampère could for an instant doubt his eagerness to proclaim the discovery, and to make his picture of Rome's first emperor more favorable, whilst making it more complete; but such has not seemed to him to be the case. On all sides he found evidence of the

deep selfishness, the hypocrisy, and the “ littleness of soul ” of Augustus.

“ I acknowledge,” he observes, “ his talents, his intelligence, that cleverness which has been so constantly remarked ; but, in acknowledging it, I cannot but regret how many writers have neglected to see that often with him ability was nothing more than dissimulation and falsehood. Above all, sufficient notice is not taken of the use he made of his intelligence, employing it for the destruction of all political life in the state, of all moral energy in men’s minds, and for the preparation of that permanent degradation, of that gradual dissolution, wherein was soon swallowed up the greatness of the Roman name.”

Here we find the trace of what we noted in the beginning, of the peculiar kind of attraction exercised upon M. Ampère, as upon Guillaume Guizot, by certain pages of the historic annals of the world. At each step in the life of Octavius, the anti-Napoleonic author may, undoubtedly, be struck by the frequent and strong resemblance offered to the present Emperor of the French, and it is scarcely to be wondered at if one of the most sincere and ardent lovers of political freedom in the present day should be unable to resist the temptation of pointing out to his countrymen the similitudes which undeniably exist between the characters, and, to a certain degree, the destinies, of Julius and Octavius Cæsar, and of that other uncle and nephew of southern origin whose rule has twice within our century crushed all liberty in France.

Naturally, on this side of the Atlantic, it would be of very subordinate interest to the readers of M. Ampère’s book on Roman history, that in it he should have found means to draw political comparisons applicable only to the readers of his own country ; but the work itself is, without reference to this feature, deeply interesting, full of intensely curious details, written in the most brilliant language, and worthy to fix the attention of whomsoever shall find it under his hand. At the same time, we have thought it not uninteresting to American readers to give them the clew to the absorbing curiosity with which, as it appeared in number after number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, it was watched for and devoured by the French public.

The anti-Napoleonic tendency that inspires M. Ampère is

by no means that which induced M. Thiers to undertake his voluminous work upon "The Consulate and the Empire." Thiers has, time out of mind, been a Bonapartist; and if he had not been so by vanity and by instinct, he would have been so by circumstances, and from the fact of his having been identified with the transportation of the Emperor's coffin from St. Helena to France. Thiers's position in this respect is rather a singular one, and among all the eminent political men and men of intelligence who are unassociated with the existing order of things in France, the secession of the leader of the opposition under Louis Philippe is the least easy to understand or explain. Whilst a constitutional government existed in the country, M. Thiers was for ever employing its liberties in order to vaunt the glories of Bonaparte, and his perpetual theme was the superior importance enjoyed by France when the eagle, instead of the cock, surmounted her flag. Glory was his war-cry,—the glory of the nation; and he lost no opportunity of declaring that France was humbled under the sway of the Orleans branch, and of pouring forth long harangues upon the shame inflicted at Waterloo. This went so far, that upon one occasion a conservative deputy is said to have exclaimed: "But what is M. Thiers driving at? Does he want, in Heaven's name, to restore to us the reign of Napoleon the Great?" And Marshal Bugeaud is reported to have rejoined: "Yes, but upon the condition of Napoleon the Great being this time no other than himself." It really would seem as though there were some truth in this; for when the nephew of the first Napoleon seized upon supreme authority, M. Thiers, instead of rejoicing thereat, bethought himself of his parliamentary antecedents, and refused to have anything to do with the violator of political and constitutional freedom in France. And yet—for his incoherencies do not stop here—when he resumes his pen to narrate the high deeds of the Empire, he is once more transformed into an undeniable imperialist, and exultingly breathes Bonapartism as his native atmosphere.

That there is great merit in these large volumes, of which *fourteen* lie already beneath the reader's eye, there can be no denial and no doubt; but that they are unequal and full of in-

accuracies, is also a fact not to be gainsaid; as it should likewise be remarked that their merit, where it occurs, is a special one, and one upon which there are two opposite opinions. The chief merit of M. Thiers is as a military historian, and it is admitted by tacticians themselves that they derive information from the way in which he describes the various battles and campaigns of the first empire. His fault—which is an evident one for the general reader—lies in his too great attachment to detail—in his sacrifice of a large and general view of things by the often tiresome attention paid to minute trifles.

In his recital of the Russian campaign of 1812, which is the principal subject of his fourteenth volume, M. Thiers is, we think, very inferior to the writers who have already treated that subject in France, and we ascribe his inferiority to the method of description he adopts. To describe that immense disaster which proved Napoleon's insanity and presaged his fall, it is not enough to have a strong enumerative faculty, to count the buttons on the gaiters of each infantry soldier, or to compute the quantity of rations divided between so many mouths. This suffices as little for the task, as for that of composing the *Iliad* it would suffice to be a banker's clerk. There is a sense that fails M. Thiers for this portion of his book,—the sense of the past, the poetical, the sublime; and the writers who have far better succeeded in reproducing the gigantic catastrophe of 1812 are men whose talent took its rise in their loftiness of intellect and in their constant habit of viewing everything from the height of philosophic and æsthetic contemplation. We will ask no further examples than those of Villemain and Châteaubriand. The latter, in one or two chapters of his (in many points deficient) *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, has left a finer and more real picture of the campaign of Russia than M. Thiers attains to in his whole enormous octavo; whilst to M. Villemain our epoch is indebted for the first and most irrefutably correct likeness of the greatest conqueror of modern times, when long habits of despotism and successful military adventure (no matter how dearly bought) had brought him to that narrow verge where a single step farther confounds genius and folly. Thus, if we

take, for instance, two pages from M. Villemain, we shall know more of the man (and in this case *the man* is everything) than M. Thiers can tell us from beginning to end of his compilation. Napoleon is brooding over the plan of the Russian expedition, not as a mere military man would do, not as Wallenstein, or Turenne, or Marlborough, or Frederick II., or any other general we wot of, would have done, but as he only could or would do,—as a conqueror of the race of Alexander, *as a poet*, as the being of whom Châteaubriand truly said, “But for the Muse, he would not be what he is.” He has sent for his confidant, M. de Narbonne, with whom he remains closeted for hours, pouring forth all that is in him, and so dazzling his hearer that, when he regains his carriage, in which he has left Villemain (then quite a young man), he is as it were possessed himself; and, affrighted at the terrible grandeur, the insane vastness, of the conceptions that have been communicated to him, he exclaims: “Good God! where is the reality of all this? where is the curb to this madness or this genius? *Is his place Bedlam or the Pantheon?*” Here we have the real, because the poetical, Napoleon,—the Napoleon unguessed at by M. Thiers. And so, too, when, farther on, we follow in Duroc’s journal the restless anxiety that has fastened on the Emperor,—the fever which, when he was once upon his fatal war-path, never left him for days, weeks, months:—“Last night he slept for two hours. He says we have still time before us. To-day he has taken opium to calm his sufferings, which are great;—he says we must march or die,—that emperors die standing, *and so die never*. But what is to be done? Where are we to march? How are we to act? This doubt, this fever, cannot endure!”

Of all this anguish, and of this fearful, yet still *heroic* reality, what trace is there in M. Thiers? None. But let us end with a last quotation. If we read M. Thiers’s fourteenth volume alone, we might be for ever ignorant of what formed the subject of Napoleon’s chief preoccupation when he found himself seated in the Kremlin in the apartments of Catherine II., whilst the ruins of Moscow were smoking and smouldering around him. In a vast and dimly-lighted

presence-chamber, with his aides-de-camp and marshals gathered together, the thoughts of Napoleon were less upon the necessities of the hour, upon the means whereby to escape from the formidable difficulties and complications into which he had so rashly plunged, than upon the judgment of posterity upon himself. He was busy in framing the so-called Decree of Moscow for the organization of the *Théâtre Français*; his talk was of actors and actresses, heroes and poets, and he was full of all but angry surprise that “the dramatists of *his reign*” did not invent great things, and put upon the stage heroes whom the world should compare with himself! “Why don’t they take Philip, Augustus, or Charlemagne?” he said; “or indeed, why not Peter the Great, that man of granite, who founded Russian civilization here and Russia’s ascendancy in Europe,—Peter the Great, who, a century after his death, forces me to this terrible invasion?”

Here, we maintain, is the *reality* of the hero,—for, whatever we may condemn in him, a *hero*, in the antique sense of the word, he remains. But of all this, we again repeat, there is no trace in M. Thiers, and consequently we are disposed to say that, upon the whole, the fourteenth volume of “The Consulate and the Empire” is one of the least remarkable of the whole work.

Moreover, for the critical French reader, there is always a defect in M. Thiers which it is hard to palliate with a race that, in every branch of art, is above all enamored of forms. M. Thiers’s books are written in anything but what is termed “*la grande langue française*,” and fall far below that pure, simple, lofty, splendid style which some contemporary writers seem to have caught from those of the incomparable seventeenth century, of whom M. Thiers is as ignorant as M. Scribe. We mention this name, because it has been often said in France that Scribe, Vernet, and Thiers were, in the drama, in painting, and in political literature, three artists of precisely the same order,—full of intelligence and ability, calculated to be popular with the general public, but wholly unaware what are the secrets and the treasures contained in the austere regions of high art. M. Thiers, at the tribune of the Cham-

ber of Deputies, was the most seductive, the most captivating speaker that could well be imagined; his lucidness of explanation, and his extreme facility of expression, combined with that promptness of intelligence which enables him to assimilate to himself in a few hours subjects he has never thought upon once before in all his life, gave him the power of initiating his hearers into the details, no matter how intricate, of any topic of discussion whatsoever; and the versatility of his imagination and the brilliancy of his wit enabled him to charm his public by his manner of dealing with things which in themselves had no interest for any one person present. But these aptitudes have no application to the severer task of the political historian, whose written page is his means of communication with the public. Here M. Thiers, all but magical when he is merely called upon to employ his faculty of improvisation, sinks to a level decidedly inferior to that of the great thinkers and writers of France. Perhaps one word in the above phrase implies the chief reason of this fact. M. Thiers is no *thinker*. He himself avows this, when, in the commencement of his last volume, he declares the only positive necessity for a good historical writer to be "intelligence." He is little tormented by the philosophy hidden in history, by the mysterious sense of events, by the secret causes of things, by that which, being intangible and immaterial, yet produces and governs what becomes incarnate in facts and falls under the appreciation of the senses. Thiers in political history, as Scribe in the drama, occupies himself only with what is material, and therefore can find sympathy only among the superficial, which indeed, in all countries (unless we except North Germany), means the great majority of the people.

Some of these remarks are suggested to us as opportune, for the reason that M. Scribe is just bringing out a new and complete edition of the dramatic works with which, for the last forty years nearly, he has helped to supply the wants of the stage in France, and than which it is, in some respects, hardly possible to find a more curious field for critical study.

Great geniuses owe little or nothing to their nationality.

Their native country is God's whole creation, and it is only where human souls rise above all the special and particular trammels of country, sect, party, or whatever might bind them down to one definite spot of earth, that they find their compatriots. From such, then, we need never ask for information as to the society around them; for they live in it, but are not of it. It is the inferior order of spirits that reflect what surrounds them, and, instead of giving their own impress to, take *its* impress from, their age. For this reason, we do not hesitate in repeating that the *Théâtre de Scribe* is one of the curious and instructive publications of the present time, for it gives us the aspect of civilization in France as in a mirror. Scribe's theatrical productions are counted by hundreds, and are of almost every kind,—operas, vaudevilles, comedies, melodramas. There is no form of theatrical creation, unless indeed the pure classical tragedy, that he has not attempted and *succeeded in*. Let this be well remembered; for though some of his pieces may have had comparatively less success than others, he does not reckon one absolute, irrevocable failure. It is consequently but fair to suppose, that between the majority of Frenchmen—the “public”—and Scribe there was sympathy. Now whence arose this? From the fact that Scribe painted the feelings and spoke the language of the common people in France. Whatever might be the peculiar tendencies of society at large, those tendencies he adopted; and when a play of Scribe's was on the *affiche*, the audience was certain not to have its intellectual powers taxed too highly, not to be solicited by any “out of the way” characters or events, but to see moving upon the stage men and women in whom every person, in boxes, stalls, or pit, might recognize his neighbor or himself. Here lies the secret of Scribe's immense and lasting popularity,—he addresses himself to what by the refined, by the *élite*, is termed in France *l'élément épicier*; in Germany, *Philisterthum*; and in England, *Snobism*. He makes for snobbism everywhere, counts upon it, and renders it contented with itself. He appeals to the aggregate mass of snobbism that floats over the social spheres generally, and to the latent *snobbishness* that lurks in the

souls of otherwise distinguished and *un-snobbish* individuals. Whatever has been the particular platitude or the particular affectation of a period of time in France during the last forty years, we may be sure of seeing it faithfully reflected in Scribe; and—just the reverse of Thackeray, for instance, in this respect—he fills the snob who listens to him with self-satisfaction, and sends him away by many degrees more of a snob than he was before, and by as many degrees farther from any suspicion of the fact. All of what we would call the external civilization of France, under the restoration and the reign of Louis Philippe, is laid before our eyes by the *Théâtre* of Scribe. Like Balzac, he makes us familiar with what went on upon the surface of French society; with this difference only, that in Balzac we learn at the same time what went on *beneath* the surface. All the conventionalisms of what French people so pompously term “the world” are honored by M. Scribe, and all its sentimentalisms are gravely accepted. We do not believe that genuine virtue was one whit the gainer by all this; but decency and decorum were not shocked. A married woman, for instance, was for years too tenderly attached to a young unmarried man. She had deceived all the while the husband to whom her faith had been pledged, but she had done so with so much precaution, with such *égards*! Not a word of too severe censure will be applied to her, and when she herself unfastens the chain which binds her to the person to whom she had no right to be attached, and when she does this for his express benefit, and in order that he may espouse a rich wife, the audience (husbands and all, forsooth!) are deeply touched by her heroic devotion, tearfully applaud both her and her quondam *adorateur*, and expect the latter and his young wife to be a respectable couple, as persons should be who have done a proper and reasonable thing, and as nine tenths of those are who have just witnessed it. Where is the morality? it may be asked. There is none; but the vast majority of the persons composing the society of France will argue, that, all scandal being avoided, there is no immorality, and young new-married women will be taken in crowds to see such plays by husbands whose bachelor career is, per-

haps, represented by the *amant*, and whose conjugal life will most likely be modelled upon that of the *mari*. To take another specimen: two young persons — cousins, friends, what not — grow up together and commit the folly of falling in love. What happens? The public is called upon to assist at the struggles and sacrifice of both, and to applaud the magnanimity with which each renounces the other, because their union would be an unpardonable imprudence, and because for each another and wealthier “half” is destined! And the public does applaud this, and gives itself credit for no end of sentimentality in weeping over it; young girls are taken to see it, with the hope that they will profit by it, and discern the impropriety of love-matches; and no one has the dimmest notion that the sacrifice so extolled is the immorality, that the act of “prudence” which closes the drama is the purchase and sale of a human heart, and that, in the deliberate acceptance of the hardships of life, together with the chosen one, lies not the folly, but the force, not the impropriety, but the virtue.

It is precisely because M. Scribe startled it by no higher morality, that the society of France so adopted him,—because he accepted all its fictions, that it repaid him by all its favors. He was wise enough never to *preach*, never to declaim, never to seem better or *other* than his audience; and his reward has been an enormous fortune, a seat in the *Académie Française*, and a popularity such as few writers have ever enjoyed. To this day (though in a less degree than ten or twelve years ago) the public that listens to one of M. Scribe’s plays is in fact occupied with itself (the pleasantest of all occupations), and, as it looks and listens, says: “There I am; that is I; and how interesting I am, and how much worthier and more honest, and in every respect better, than has been said, or than I even thought!”

We will now explain what we mean by the words, “In a less degree than some ten or twelve years ago.”

It is certain that, like all men, Scribe has necessarily submitted to the influence of his years, and, as is the case with every writer, unless in some few notable exceptions, what he has witnessed at the age of fifty or fifty-five has not impressed

him with the same vivacity as what he witnessed at twenty-five or thirty. The consequence is, that, to the actual generation, to the men and women of between twenty and thirty, Scribe does not represent the same sum of truth that he represented to those who are fifteen years older. Existing society in France is not so faithfully mirrored by Scribe, as by such young authors as Alexander Dumas *fils*. He is not at home in it; its sentimentalities and fictions are not those of his time; its snobbishness is of another kind than that he accepted and glorified; and as for its conventionalities, *it has none*,—and it is in the very absence of these that lies its radical dissimilarity from the society of a few years earlier. Of all sorts of irregularities covered over with a veil, and of intrigues decently managed, Scribe takes cognizance; but of the civilization which adopts effrontery for its watch-word, which disguises nothing, but on the contrary boasts of more vices than it really owns,—of this Scribe is ignorant, and of all “*Dames aux Caméllias*,” “*Filles de Marbre*,” and such like patented impurity, he washes his hands. With the succession of the *Lionne* and the *Lorette* to the social throne and sceptre ceases the dramatic high-priesthood of Eugène Scribe, and when the *Demi-monde* begins to exist (long before young Dumas begins to paint it), the truth of his inventions is no longer a contemporary truth,—it is the truth of what is past; it is by the very young styled *rococo*.

Whence came the flagrant, flaunting, flashy corruption of French manners, so contrary to the natural instincts of the race, so repugnant to all their most venerated traditions of good taste, it would be hard to say; but it has come, and upon the sacrifice of good breeding in France every other sacrifice has been attendant. Did literature suggest a model to society; or did society originate the type that literature merely copied? We are inclined to believe the latter. When Eugène Sue took to painting *les Lionnes*, those ill-mannered, boisterous dames had already curbed society under their riding-whip; and when Roqueplan, in a witty little monograph, threw out the word *Lorette* for the public to fasten on, the thing had long existed, and its notoriety was evident.

There are few countries of the European continent where

La Lorette may not be discovered in one form or another, nor are those the least corrupt where this product of hyper-civilization is least visible ; but in every country except France, the influence of family, which is the antidote to the *Lorette*, is victorious over her, and ends by forcing her to be ostensibly what she is in fact, — a mark for contempt and for shame. Not so with society in France. Here, the *Lorette* reigns and rules, and to her family is sacrificed. Not only do her worshippers voluntarily abdicate their own natural sphere, in order to move habitually in hers ; but the women of what is called “the world,” of what calls itself “the honest and the proper world,” condescend to take the *Lorette* for their model, — copy her dress, ape her manners, imitate her language, and insanely fancy that by this self-degradation they shall secure to themselves her supremacy. Here was the origin of the *Lorette’s* importance ; here was what granted to her letters of naturalization in Parisian society ; and to any one who should not take all this into account, the aspect of that society during the last ten or twelve years would be an enigma. Hence dates, too, the relative superiority of the *Lorette* ; for, from the day when duchesses aspired to be mistaken for *Lorettes*, it became the ambition of the latter to be mistaken for duchesses, and they little by little grew to affect the steady air of acknowledged social powers, and to assume what we would fain denominate a kind of regularity in wrong. *Les Lorettes* were, as a German critic has observed, “an establishment in the state.” Among the materials that constitute the *ensemble* of the social edifice they counted for as large a part as did family.

Now we maintain, that, judged by the standard of real honor and real virtue, the narrow-minded, selfish, and for ever untruth-telling society, so well reflected by M. Scribe, is not one whit more virtuous or more honorable than that over which reigns *la Lorette*, but is less scandalous ; and when scandal came to be the order of the day in France, the *Théâtre de Scribe* was, as the French express it, “alongside of the truth,” — it was no longer true.

As we have said, the *Lorette* reign has lasted some ten or twelve years (beginning about 1844) ; but its splendor is

already on the wane, and those who within the last two or three years have the most borne witness to its existence have done so by levelling at it the first and most terrible attacks. Going with the stream, Alexander Dumas *fils* published in 1848 or 1849 his novel called *La Dame aux Camélias*, the very most complete expression of *Lorette* literature, and by its immense success he was induced to adapt it under the same title for the stage, where, during a hundred consecutive representations it remained the apology and triumph of *Loretteism*. Its author was the champion of *La Lorette*, and Marguerite Gauthier, his heroine, was admitted to share the honors of all those types which for a time command the applause of the public upon the stage. But Alexander Dumas, to his credit be it said, saw farther than his own success; or rather, the still greater success of a piece which was the counterpart of his own pointed out to him what might perhaps soon be the current of social opinion, if it were adroitly seized. *Les Filles de Marbre*, a keen, undisguised attack upon all the "Camellia-ladies" in the world, revolutionized Paris, and may be said to have been *an event*. The impetus was given. Young Dumas produced his *Diane de Lys*, in which the horrors of illicit affection are very aptly portrayed. Emile Angier followed with his *Mariage d'Olympe*, to which public favor did not so openly attach, precisely because the impure were more punished than condemned; and young Dumas fixed public opinion to self-consistency by what crowned this campaign against *les Lorettes*,—his famous piece called *Le Demi-monde*,—than which none ever drew the public more entirely along with it in the bold disdain it expressed for what was "outside the regularities of life and the decencies and respectabilities of society." The moral of the whole was the concluding phrase,—the formula of what may be regarded as the protest of society against the disorder it had tolerated too long. A French officer, a man of unblemished character, is about to fall a victim to the wiles of a *Lorette*, and to give her his hand and his name; but he is saved by a friend, who unmasks her, and consoles the lover's grief over his lost illusion by saying: "Remember, my dear fellow, that an honest woman only is worthy to be the companion, the wife, of an

honest man." To any one who may compare this sentence with all the theories of Victor Hugo, George Sand, and some others, touching the perfection of female virtue as dependent upon having at least once swerved from the path of duty and of right, it will be evident that a great progress has been made. There is no doubt of the fact; it is now "a received thing," as the phrase runs in France, that *Loretism* is contrary to good taste, and the *Dames aux Camélias* totter upon their throne. But it must not be forgotten that the very importance of the attacks made upon them proves in turn the social importance they had acquired, without acknowledging which it would be impossible to arrive at anything like a just appreciation of the French society of our day.

One of the hardest blows that has been aimed at this "fifth power," as it has sometimes been called, is the treatise written by Messrs. de Goucourt (brothers), entitled *La Lorette*, published in a miniature form and sold in profusion throughout Paris. This little book it would perhaps be difficult to translate for our side of the Atlantic, but its publication may be regarded as a courageous act, and as a public service rendered on the other side of it. What we mean by a "courageous act" we will explain. The man who openly attacked *Loretism* a year or two ago exposed himself to the silence or to the abuse of the greater number of the journals of Paris; for if we except some few of the more respectable or aristocratic of these papers, nowhere had the *Lorette* such authority as over the *feuilleton*. This was the centre of the dominion she exercised by *camaraderie*, and for any writer not standing upon one of those pinnacles of fame where there is impunity for whatever may be advanced, the enmity of the *Lorette* phalanx was a very serious consideration. Now, as we said, times are modified, and the tendency is in favor of the domestic element. As in the case of the *Théâtre de Scribe*, so here again we say it may be doubtful whether real virtue and morality are as much the gainers by all this as might be supposed; but scandal is the loser, and ostensibly family is triumphant over the *Lorette*. For those among our countrymen who wish to have an accurate notion of the state of society, morally speaking, in France, from 1813 up to our

times, we would earnestly recommend an attentive perusal of the *Théâtre de Scribe*, followed by that of Alexander Dumas *filz*, and by the little treatise we mention, from the pen of the brothers De Goucourt. These are not things to be neglected, and such apparently light productions often paint more truly the moral condition of a country, than do huge volumes of statistics or political economy.

There is another branch of literature in France which we propose to examine in our next number,—the so-called *Littérature de la Bohème*,—which occupies a not inconspicuous place in the French world of intelligence, but to which our present limits would not allow of our doing justice. This *Bohemian literature* may not improperly be considered as the history of the “decline” of letters in France, as the literature of the seventeenth century is pre-eminently that of their highest point of glory. Under the first half of the reign of Louis XIV., as under the Restoration and Louis XVIII., we have to watch the dignity of what the Athenians of modern days term with such pride *les lettres françaises*, and to note the tokens of respect by which great writers are surrounded, and the respect they take care to pay to themselves. For the last five or six and twenty years it is the very reverse that has to be observed, and an entire literature (full of talent, alas! in its way) is there to testify to the moral unworthiness, the social degradation, and the loss of self-esteem of nine tenths of the so-called men of letters in France. As in the case of the *Lorettes*, so with the *Bohemians*, there is no means of entirely judging the condition of French literature without taking them into account. They unfortunately represent a very large portion of the national literature at present, and, as we said, so far as *mere* talent goes, apart from every other qualification, they are often too highly distinguished for it to be possible to pass them over in silence.

Apropos to the flourishing state of letters in France under the Restoration, and to the social dignity of the men of intellect of that period, Lamartine’s last *Entretien* (the tenth number) is as interesting as it is eloquent. Leaving on one side his Indian philosophers, and the subjects with which, for the previous six months, he had somewhat tired his readers, he has

in this last number launched out into a magnificent defence of the men who made illustrious the first years of the present century in France, and gave it a right to be classed as on a level with the age of Louis XIII. and XIV. Starting from the time of the Convention, and passing on to the Empire, to the Restoration, and thence to the Government of July, he pays a tribute of admiration no less just than admirably expressed to a period which, intellectually speaking, will always be one of France's titles to fame in the eyes of the world. Not one of the great names of the age is forgotten, and each is appreciated in a way that proves the author of *Jocelyn*, when he is animated by a sincere conviction, to be as well gifted in critical qualities as in those of poetic inspiration. M. de Lamartine's tenth *Entretien* has created a strong sensation, and calls everywhere for the reader's best attention.

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- ART. X.—1. *Die Geschichte der Römer*. Von FR. DOR. GER-LACH und J. J. BACHOFEN. Erster Band. Basel: Bahn-maier's Buchhandlung. (C. Detloff.) 1851. 8vo. pp. 669.
2. *Römische Geschichte*. Von DR. A. SCHWEGLER, ausserord. Prof. der Class. Lit. an der Universität Tübingen. Erster Band. Tübingen. 1853. Verlag der H. Laupp'schen Buch-handlung. (Laupp und Siebeck.) 8vo. pp. 808.
3. *Geschichte Roms in drei Bänden*. Von DR. CARL PETER, Director des Gymnasiums in Anklam, und Herzoglicher Sachsen-Meiningen'scher Consistorial- und Schul-Rath. Erster Band, die fünf ersten Bücher. *Von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gracchen enthaltend*. Halle, Waisen-haus Buchhandlung. 1853. 8vo. pp. 616.
4. *Römische Geschichte*. Von THEODOR MOMMSEN. Erster Band. *Bis zur Schlacht von Pydna*. Leipzig, Weidmann'-sche Buchhandlung. 1854. 8vo. pp. 644.

ROMAN History has fully shared in the rapid progress made in all branches of classical philology in the past thirty years. In no other branch, indeed, can progress be so clearly seen